

CITY COUNCIL PROCEEDINGS

Tuesday, March 3, 2026

CALL TO ORDER

This meeting is officially called to order at 5:30 pm on March 3, 2026. This meeting is being presided over by Mayor Mike Lorensen.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

ROLL CALL

The following Councilmembers were present: Pream, McCraw, Lorensen, Narverud, Bolduc and Langness. Absent: Aarestad and Arlt. Mayor Lorensen chaired the meeting.

PUBLIC HEARING

2026 Street & Utility Improvement Feasibility Report

Travis Giffen, Public Works Director, presented a summary of the report to the council. Mayor called for any persons in attendance from the public to speak on the topic. Kaleb Torgerson addressed the council with several question/comments not relating to the feasibility report. He was asked to wait until the Public Forum to address his concerns. With no further public comment, the mayor closed the public hearing at 5:56 pm.

PUBLIC FORUM

Mark Johnson (Oak Ave) addressed the council with his on-going concerns about the deer problem in city limits. He noted the problem is not going away and is costing homeowners thousands in property damage (plants). He noted the issue has been addressed at council and in committee meetings with no plan in place. He urged the council to figure something out otherwise the deer population will continue to grow. Mike Lorensen noted he's aware that people are feeding deer within city limits which is against city ordinance and needs to be addressed. The topic will be discussed again at the March Public Safety Committee meeting.

Kaleb Torgerson addressed the council with concerns regarding speed limit increase changes on county roads (Gully and the Red Lake Reservation highways). Mike and Steve noted those roads are not within city limits and the city has no input or control on any projects there; he should contact the County Highway Department. Kaleb's comments were noted by council and taken under advisement.

PRESENTATIONS/PROCLAMATIONS/PUBLIC INFORMATION ANNOUNCEMENTS

Recognition of Dick Sjoberg, 43 years on Planning Commission

Mike Lorensen presented Dick Sjoberg with a plaque in appreciation of his 43 years of dedication to the Planning & Zoning Commission. Dick received the plaque to applause and a photo was taken for The Times.

APPROVE AGENDA

Councilmember Scott Pream motioned being seconded by Councilmember Julie Bolduc to approve the agenda with the additional of addendum items 9.4 and 9.5.

On vote being taken, the resolution was unanimously passed.

CONSENT AGENDA

RESOLUTION NO. 03.50.26: Approve February 17, 2026 Council Proceedings

Presented as part of the Consent Agenda, Councilmember Michele McCraw introduced RESOLUTION 03.50.26, being seconded by Councilmember Kelly Langness , that:

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, by the City Council, to approve the February 17, 2026 Council Proceedings.

On vote being taken, the resolution passed unanimously.

RESOLUTION NO. 03.51.26: Approval of City of Thief River Falls Bills, Disbursements and Council Per Diems

Presented as part of the Consent Agenda, Councilmember Michele McCraw introduced RESOLUTION 03.51.26, being seconded by Councilmember Kelly Langness , that:

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, by the City Council, to authorize payment of bills and disbursements in the total amount of \$1,997,195.69 and council per diem in the total amount of \$1040.00. A printout of the approved payments and disbursements are attached hereto and made apart hereof.

On vote being taken, the resolution passed unanimously.

NEW BUSINESS

RESOLUTION NO. 03.52.26: Purchase – Fire Academy Laptop

Following discussion, Councilmember Julie Bolduc introduced Resolution 03.52.26, being seconded by Councilmember Scott Pream, that:

WHEREAS, The Thief River Falls Fire Academy needs to purchase a dedicated laptop for the Lead Instructor. In the past, training sessions were conducted using the Fire Chief's computer. With the Fire Chief no longer serving as the Lead Instructor, continued use of that computer is no longer practical.

WHEREAS, The laptop is an essential piece of equipment to continue the operations of the academy.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED Approve the purchase of a Dell Pro 14 Laptop from SHI International for a cost of \$1619.68.

On vote being taken, the resolution was unanimously passed.

Second Reading to Rezone 517 Duluth Ave. S. from C-1 to C-2

Councilmember Julie Bolduc motioned, being seconded by Councilmember Michele McCraw to call for the second reading of an ordinance of:

WHEREAS, Mr. Peralta is looking to sell his property to a prospective retail business owner. A (C-1) Neighborhood Business District zoning is very limiting on what types of business can locate there. The existing use as a coffee shop/restaurant and former use as a DQ does not meet the intent and purpose of the neighborhood business district and should have been rezoned decades ago. The neighborhood business district is intended for business establishments for use by persons residing in adjacent residential areas. Uses within the district shall not attract community-wide consumer traffic. It could be argued that with the tight margins in retail sales, the neighborhood Business District doesn't exist anymore, as neighborhood businesses are unable to survive financially unless they attract customers city-wide, or more realistically from surrounding communities.

WHEREAS, • Existing use as a coffee shop/restaurant and former use as a DQ does not meet the intent and purpose of the neighborhood business district. The neighborhood business district is intended for business establishments for use by persons residing in adjacent residential areas. Uses within the district shall not attract community-wide consumer traffic.

- With the tight margins in retail sales, neighborhood businesses are unable to survive financially. Today's retail business really needs to attract customers city-wide and from surrounding communities to survive financially.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED approve the second reading for the rezoning application from Andrew Peralta, DQ – Peralta, Inc., to rezone 517 Duluth Ave. S. from Neighborhood Business District (C-1) to General Business District (C-2) to allow for broader community-wide consumer traffic.

Sec. 152.029. Nonresidential districts.

The purpose of the nonresidential districts is as follows:

1. Group compatible commercial and industrial land uses;
2. Promote quality commercial and industrial development that will minimize land use, traffic, and environmental conflicts;
3. Encourage the development of commercial and industrial sites that produce an attractive image through architecture and landscaping; and,
4. Encourage commercial and industrial developers to provide for the capital improvements necessary to service the development.

Sec. 152.030. Neighborhood business district (C-1).

1. Purpose. The neighborhood business district is intended for business establishments for use by persons residing in adjacent residential areas. Uses within the district shall not attract community-wide consumer traffic.
2. Permitted uses. Retail: barber or beauty shops, grocery stores without gas pumps.

All uses shall not exceed 3,000 square feet in gross floor area.

3. Conditional uses.
 - a. Retail. Barber or beauty shops, grocery stores with or without gasoline sales, and office buildings. All uses shall not exceed 5,000 square feet in gross floor area.
 - b. Signs. Freestanding business signs.
4. Accessory uses.
 - a. Accessory buildings.
 - b. Essential services.
 - c. Fences.
 - d. Parking lots.
 - e. Satellite dishes.
 - f. Signs.
5. Yard requirements.

	Permitted and Conditional Uses	Accessory Uses
Lot area, minimum sq. ft.	9,000	
Lot frontage, minimum at front yard setback		75 feet
Front yard setback	25 feet	25 feet
Rear yard setback	20 feet	5 feet
Side yard setback, interior	10 feet	10 feet
Side yard setback, corner	15 feet	15 feet

6. Additional restrictions. Performance standards and supplemental restrictions are set forth in this chapter.
(Ord. No. 19, 3 rd Series)

Sec. 152.031. General business district (C-2).

1. Purpose. The general business district is intended for business establishments that offer a wide variety of goods and services to customers from a large trade area.
2. Permitted uses.
 - a. Commercial service: buses, cabs, clinics, commercial trade or business schools, dry cleaning, financial institutions, hospitals, medical laboratories, laundries, mortuaries, motels, hotels, radio and television studios, and train stations.
 - b. Entertainment: private clubs, restaurants, and theaters.
 - c. Personal services: barbers, beauticians, and shoe repair.
 - d. Professional services: accountants, attorneys, dentists, doctors, engineers, financial consultants, insurance, realtors, and travel bureaus.
 - e. Public services: armories, fire stations, government offices, libraries, parks, police stations, public buildings, and publicly-owned parking lots.
 - f. Wholesale and retail: apparel, appliances, video, automobile sales, automobile service station and repair garage, bakeries, beverage, book, candy, carpet, hardware, jewelry, lumber yards, motels, music, office supply, nursery stock, plumbing and heating wholesale showrooms, and variety stores.
 - g. Religious: churches, convents, monasteries, mosques, nunneries, seminaries, synagogues, temples, and all other religious institutions or places of religious assembly.
 - h. Storage facilities.
3. Conditional uses.
 - a. Retail and wholesale: agricultural implement dealerships, beer and liquor establishments (on and off sale), lumber yards, manufactured home sales lots, pet and

animal shops or clinics, shopping centers, and taxidermists.

b. Commercial services: delivery and express businesses.

c. Publicly-owned recreational camping areas and privately-owned recreational camping areas.

d. Surface water-oriented commercial uses.

e. Car and truck wash business.

f. Owner occupied residential use with a maximum of 330 square feet on the ground floor. Any larger residential use is required to be above the ground floor. All conditions in City Code section 152.027 and 152.028 apply.

4. Accessory uses.

a. Accessory buildings and structures, including surface water-oriented structures accessory to commercial uses.

b. Buffers.

c. Essential services.

d. Fences.

e. Loading areas.

f. Parking lots.

g. Satellite dishes.

h. Signs.

5. Yard requirements.

a. General yard requirements.

	Permitted and Conditional Uses	Accessory Uses
Lot area, minimum sq. ft.	7,000	
Lot frontage, minimum at front yard setback		50 feet
Lot frontage for shoreland, minimum at front yard setback		100 feet
Front yard setback	25 feet	25 feet
Rear yard setback	20 feet	5 feet
Side yard setback, interior	15 feet	15 feet
Side yard setback, corner	15 feet	15 feet
Shoreland setback		
Sewered lots	50 feet	50 feet
Unsewered lots	100 feet	50 feet
Sewage treatment system		75 feet

b. Nongeneral yard requirements. The above general yard requirements shall apply, except as follows:

i. Principal buildings in excess of 3,000 square feet of gross floor area shall have a minimum lot area equal to two and a half times the gross floor area of the principal buildings;

ii. General business uses adjacent to a frontage street shall have a front yard setback of no less than 25 feet beginning at the interior edge of the frontage street;

iii. Buffers and essential services shall have no setback requirements, and parking lots shall have no setback requirements except in shoreland;

iv. Signs: additional yard requirements for signs are set forth in this chapter; and,

v. Setbacks for the following uses located within the shoreland shall not be less than:

1) Bait and fish houses: 10 feet.

2) Boat docks: 0 feet.

- 3) Detached decks: 10 feet.
- 4) Gazebos and screen houses: 10 feet.
- 5) Recreational equipment: 10 feet.
- 6) Satellite dishes: 30 feet.
- 7) Signs: 5 feet.

6. Additional restrictions. Performance standards and supplemental restrictions are set forth in this chapter.

(Ord. No. 85, 3rd Series 1-5-16; Ord. No. 136, 3rd Series, § 1, 4-4-21; Ord. No. 122, 3rd Series, § 1, 3-3-20; Ord. No. 10.226.25, 3rd Series, § 3, 10-21-25)

On vote being taken, second reading was approved. The City Attorney Sparby read the proposed ordinance.

RESOLUTION NO. :03.53.26 Approval to Rezone 517 Duluth Ave. S. from C-1 to C-2

Following discussion, Councilmember Scott Pream introduced Resolution 03.53.26, being seconded by Councilmember Steve Narverud, that:

WHEREAS, Mr. Peralta is looking to sell his property to a prospective retail business owner. A (C-1) Neighborhood Business District zoning is very limiting on what types of business can locate there. The existing use as a coffee shop/restaurant and former use as a DQ does not meet the intent and purpose of the neighborhood business district and should have been rezoned decades ago. The neighborhood business district is intended for business establishments for use by persons residing in adjacent residential areas. Uses within the district shall not attract community-wide consumer traffic. It could be argued that with the tight margins in retail sales, the neighborhood Business District doesn't exist anymore, as neighborhood businesses are unable to survive financially unless they attract customers city-wide, or more realistically from surrounding communities.

WHEREAS, • Existing use as a coffee shop/restaurant and former use as a DQ does not meet the intent and purpose of the neighborhood business district. The neighborhood business district is intended for business establishments for use by persons residing in adjacent residential areas. Uses within the district shall not attract community-wide consumer traffic.

- With the tight margins in retail sales, neighborhood businesses are unable to survive financially. Today's retail business really needs to attract customers city-wide and from surrounding communities to survive financially.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED approve the rezoning application from Andrew Peralta, DQ – Peralta, Inc., to rezone 517 Duluth Ave. S. from Neighborhood Business District (C-1) to General Business District (C-2) to allow for broader community-wide consumer traffic.

On vote being taken, the resolution was unanimously passed.

RESOLUTION NO. 03.54.26: Coop agreement for Hartz Park Shore Fishing Stations

Following discussion, Councilmember Julie Bolduc introduced Resolution 03.54.26, being seconded by Councilmember Kelly Langness , that:

WHEREAS, This project has been active in Public Works Committee discussions for the last two years.

WHEREAS, Coordination and administration of the project falls on the city of Thief River for In-Kind services. The State of Minnesota will reimburse the project costs to the city.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED To authorize the Mayor and City Administrator to sign a State of MN Cooperative Agreement that outlines duties between the State of Minnesota and the City of Thief River Falls in the construction and use of Handicap accessible shore fishing stations at Hartz Park.

On vote being taken, the resolution was unanimously passed.

RESOLUTION NO. :03.55.26 2026 Street & Utilities Improvement Project

Following discussion, Councilmember Scott Pream introduced Resolution 03.55.26 being seconded by Councilmember Steve Narverud, that:

WHEREAS, The items outlined in the feasibility report listed below are potential improvements based on items from the City's Capital Improvement Program, items requested by developers, homeowners, and other departments. The 2026 Street and Utilities improvement plan for the city of Thief River Falls includes:

- **6th Street Storm Sewer and Road Reconstruction**

6th street from R.R. Tracks east of REA, to Barzen Avenue

*Improvements would include increased storm sewer capacities and new catch basin transfers, concrete curb and gutter, reclamation, bituminous surfacing, sidewalk and rural roadway apron replacement, turf establishment.

Total estimated construction cost is \$1,619,518.00

*Protect Grant Funding \$400.000

- **Barzen Multi-Use Trail and pedestrian/bike improvements**

Barzen Ave from T.H. 59, south to Greenwood Street. 10' multi-use trail and base construction,

*Concrete pedestrian ramps, curb and gutter, ground in pavement marking, turf establishment.

1st street from Barzen Ave. to Calumel

*Storm Sewer realignment and placement and road reclamation reconstruction.

Multi-use trail connection from existing trail to transition to south adjacent trail on 1st street and connecting to the new Barzen Multi-use trail. 8' multi-use trail and base connection, concrete pedestrian ramps, mailbox relocation, clear and grubbing, turf establishment.

Total estimated construction cost is \$360,000.00

*TA Grant funding \$300,000.00

- **Street Lighting**(LED replacement initiative)
Replacement Head LED replacement- Lump Sum
Total Estimated Construction Cost is \$168,750.00
*CRP Grant Funding \$135,000

WHEREAS, A public hearing was held tonight, March 03, to discuss the proposed improvements. The City Council will need to order the improvements and call for plans and specifications to allow adequate preparation time to stay on schedule for a May 2026 bid opening. The council may order any, or all, of the items identified in the list of improvements.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED Order Improvements and Call for Plans and Specifications for the 2026 Street & Utilities Improvements Project as follows:

On vote being taken, the resolution was passed. Bolduc opposed.

COUNCIL BOARDS AND COMMISSIONS REPORTS

Steve Narverud reminded the public that roads are rough and icy right now and to drive slow with caution for pedestrians. Scott Pream noted those who walk at night should wear reflective gear for safety.

UPCOMING MEETINGS

- Planning Commission 3/4 at 5 pm - Council Chambers
- Public Utilities Committee 3/9 at 7 am - Room 101
- Public Safety/Liquor Committee 3/9 at 4:30 pm - Room 101
- Administrative Committee 3/10 at 4:30 pm - Room 101
- Public Works Committee 3/11 at 4:30 pm - Room 101
- City Council 3/17 at 5:30 pm - Council Chambers

INFORMATIONAL ITEMS

- Mayoral Update
- Scott Pream noted it was a busy weekend in Thief River Falls with basketball and hockey tournament games all weekend. Downtown and restaurants were busy and full and great to see.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further discussion, Councilmember Scott Pream motioned being seconded by Councilmember Kelly Langness to adjourn at 6:21 pm. On vote being taken, the Chair declared the motion unanimously carried.

Mayor Mike Lorenson

Attest: City Administrator, Angela Philipp _____